

A light purple world map is visible in the background, showing the outlines of continents and countries.

# Questionnaire Design

for Cross-Cultural Survey Research



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# GOAL

To construct questions that allow for the collection of reliable and valid data that is representative of the population of interest.

- Don't use biasing language
- Ask about one concept at a time
- Construct exhaustive and mutually exclusive response options
- Specify the response task

A large, vibrant outdoor market at dusk. The scene is filled with numerous stalls, many of which are covered with white or light-colored tarps. The stalls are illuminated by warm, yellow lights, creating a lively atmosphere. A large crowd of people is seen walking through the market, and the background shows a cityscape with a prominent tower under a twilight sky.

# International Context

It's complicated!

# Learning Objectives

Describe attitude, knowledge, behavior, and sensitive questions

Use strategies to write these types of questions with cultural considerations in mind



# Attitude Questions



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Measure someone's views or feelings on a topic

Cannot be fact checked

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Measure someone's views or feelings on a topic

Cannot be fact checked

Behavioral: Did you vote in the last election? vs.

Attitudinal: What was your biggest motivation for voting in the last election?



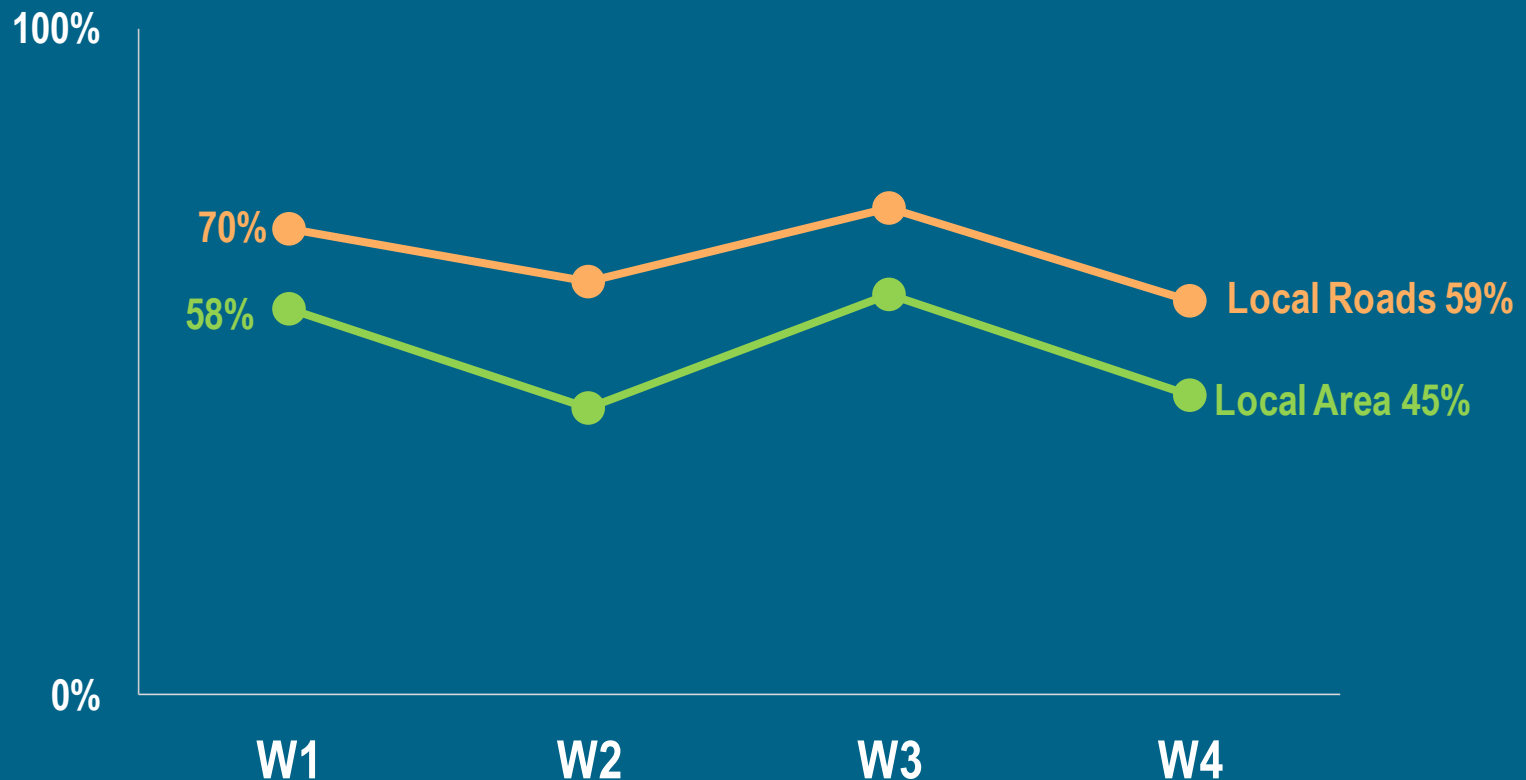
**Answers to attitude questions are fluid and can change often.**

**Beliefs and perceptions are complex ideas.**

# Fluid Attitudes

Q2a. Would you say security in your local area is good, fair or poor? Is that 'very good/poor'?

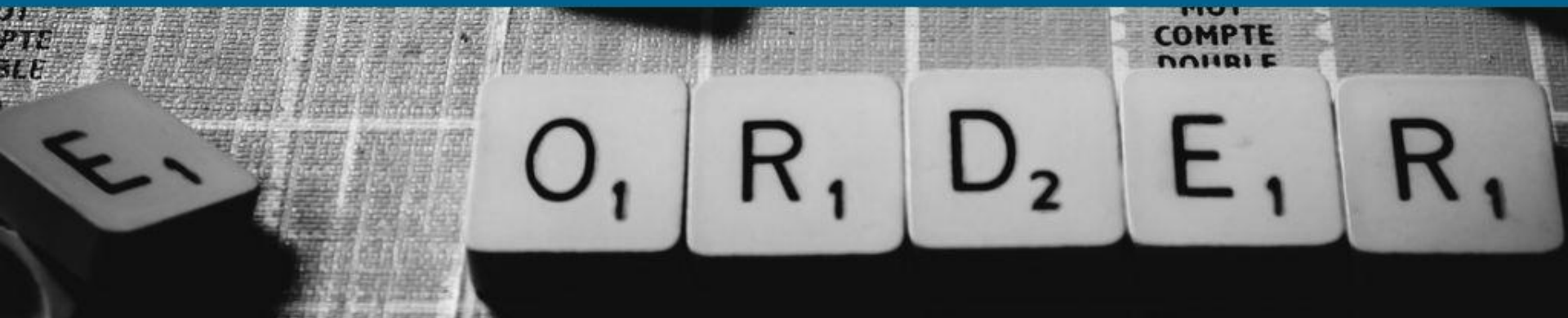
Q2b. Would you say security on local roads is good, fair or poor? Is that 'very good/poor'?





Understand  
external  
conditions  
that  
influence  
attitudes

Question order can  
have profound effect  
on responses to your  
attitude question.



# Question Order Effect

Election Survey A and Election Survey B were used to project the number of likely voters in the Afghanistan presidential election (held April 2014).

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Election Survey A and Election Survey B were used to project the number of likely voters in the Afghanistan presidential election (held April 2014).

The percentage of respondents who were likely to vote was off by 15%....  
*WHY?*

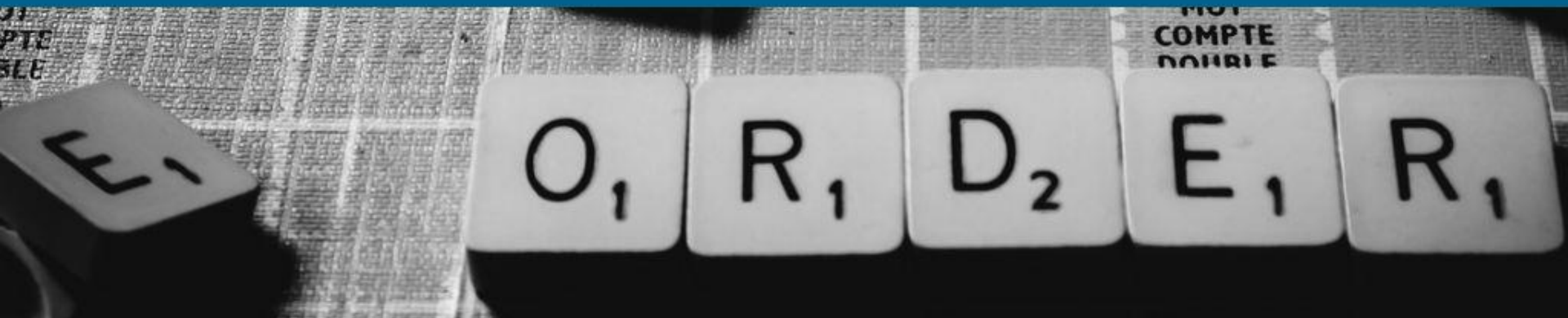
# Example of Question Order

Election Survey A: Likelihood of voting question followed questions about past voting behavior

Election Survey B: Likelihood of voting question followed questions about security

# Tips for Question Order

- Consider how other questions frame respondents' thinking
- Open-ended questions before closed-ended questions
- Start with warm-up questions
- Consider respondent fatigue





Understand  
& clearly  
define the  
attitude  
object.



Understand  
& clearly  
define the  
attitude  
object.

Revisit your  
research  
question.



**Research question: How do Egyptians perceive legitimacy of their newly formed government?**

# Research question: How do Egyptians perceive legitimacy of their newly formed government?

**Favorability:** Q36a. Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable view of the government?

**Confidence:** Q36b. How do you feel about the government's ability to govern fairly – very confident, somewhat confident, not so confident or not confident at all?

**Support:** Q36c. How do you feel about most decisions made by the government – do you support them strongly, support them somewhat, oppose them somewhat or oppose them strongly?



**Ask simple questions.  
Avoid double barreled questions.**



# Double Barreled Question

Q-11. Do you think the Iraqi Government provides services and aid to all Iraqis equally or do they favor one group or actor over the others?

1. Yes, provides services and aid to all Iraqis equally
2. No, favors one group over others

---

98. Refused (vol.)

99. Don't Know (vol.)

# Revised Question Wording

Q-11a. Do you think the Iraqi Government provides services and aid to all Iraqis equally?

1. Yes
2. No

---

98. Refused (vol.)

99. Don't Know (vol.)

Q-11b. Do you think the Iraqi Government favors one group or actor over the others?

1. Yes
2. No

---

98. Refused (vol.)

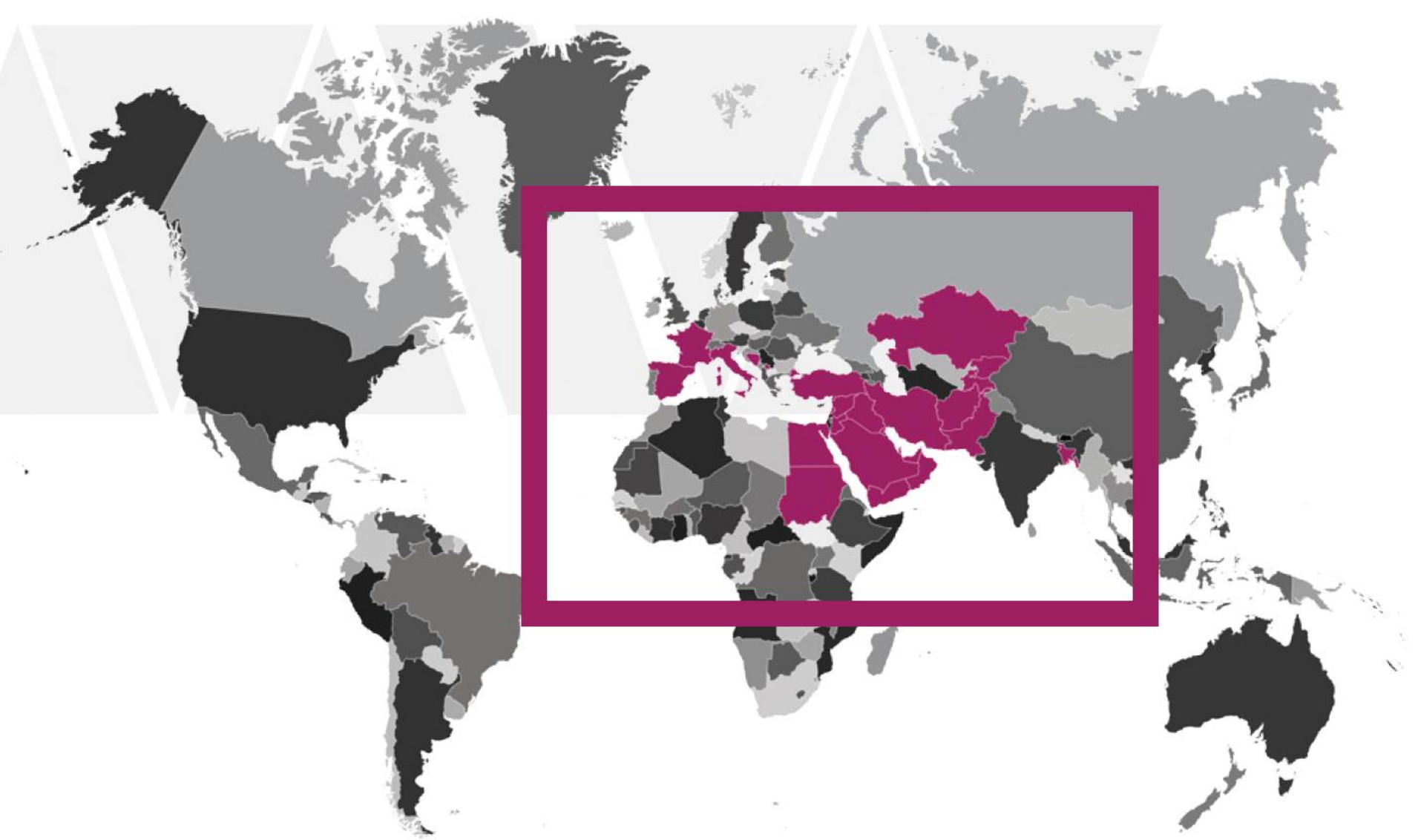
99. Don't Know (vol.)

Break it  
down if it is  
too difficult  
to capture  
the whole  
picture in  
one  
question.





# Drill Down Battery Questions



# Drill Down Battery Questions

Q30. Do you believe women in your country have fewer rights than men, the same or equal rights, or more rights than men when it comes to the following...?

	Fewer Rights	Equal Rights	More Rights	Refused (vol.)	Don't know (vol.)
a. Participating in politics	1	2	3	98	99
b. Access to education	1	2	3	98	99
c. Access to employment	1	2	3	98	99
d. Protection from violence	1	2	3	98	99
e. Access to healthcare	1	2	3	98	99
f. Decisions regarding reproductive health	1	2	3	98	99



# Knowledge Questions

# Knowledge Questions

Measure effectiveness of an educational process

Measure knowledge in order to effectively design and implement information programs or advertising campaigns

Measure intelligence, which may be required to explain behavioral and attitudinal variables



**Ask  
knowledge  
questions to  
screen out  
respondents  
who lack  
information  
about a  
topic**

# Screening Questions

Q-27. Biometric fingerprint scanners are scheduled to be used in the 2015 presidential election in Yemen. Are you aware of Yemen's planned new biometric voting registry?

1. Yes
2. No

---

98. Refused (vol.)

99. Don't Know (vol.)

# Screening Questions

Q-28. (If '1' in Q27) Do you support or oppose the creation of the new voting system, or do you neither support nor oppose it?

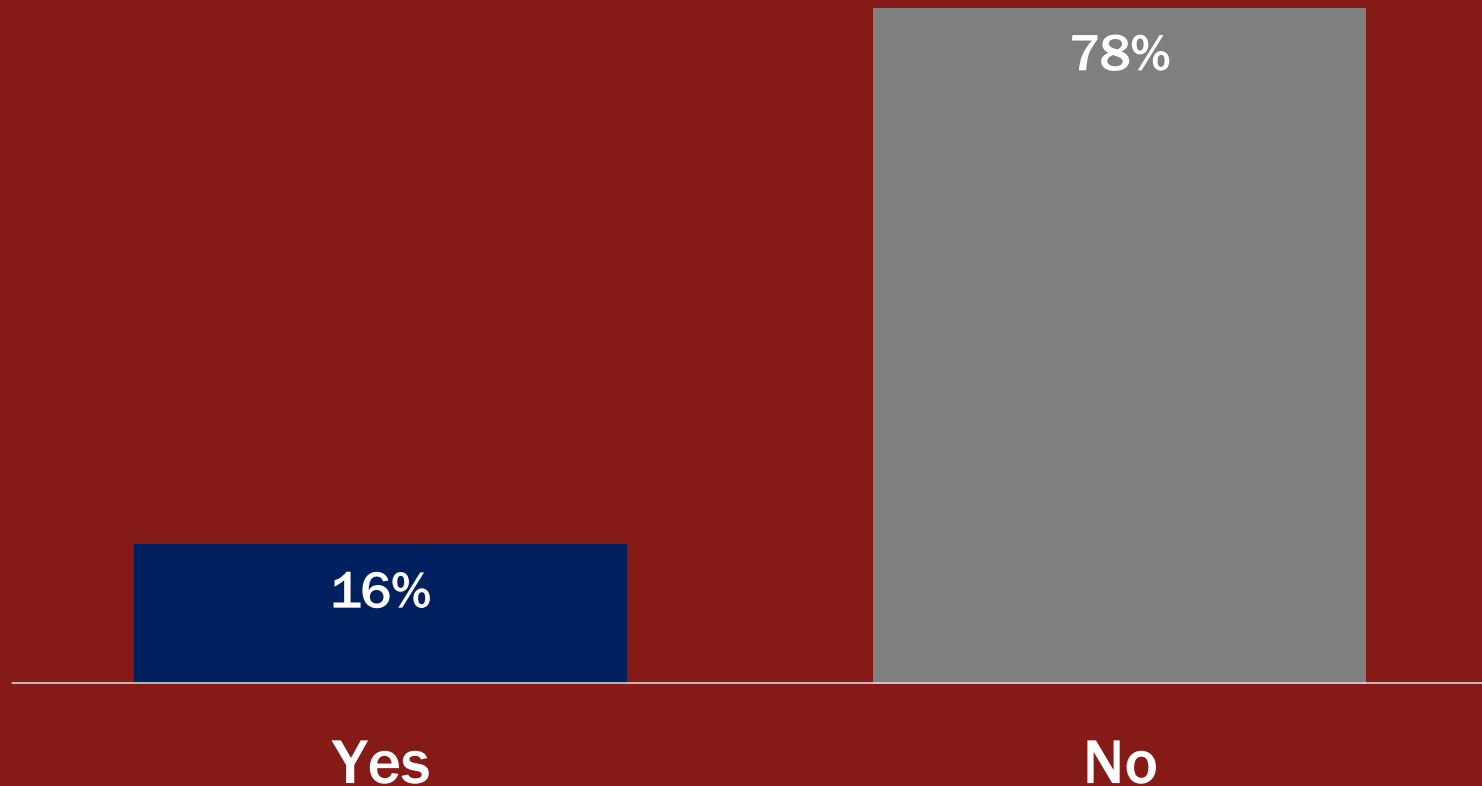
1. Support it
2. Neither support nor oppose it
3. Oppose it

---

98. Refused (vol.)

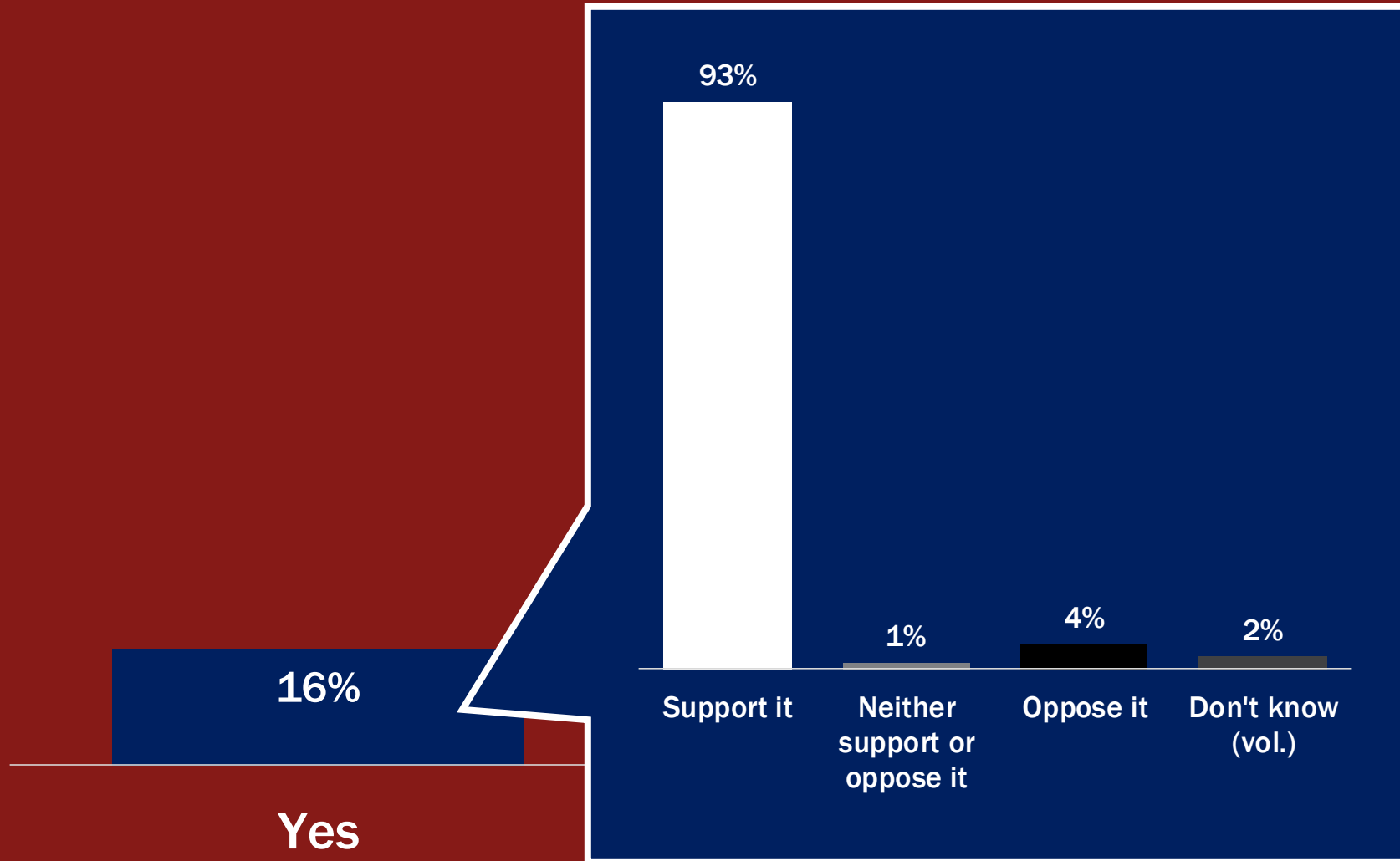
99. Don't Know (vol.)

**More than three fourths of respondents were not aware of Yemen's biometric voting registry.**





Of those who are aware, the overwhelming majority support it.

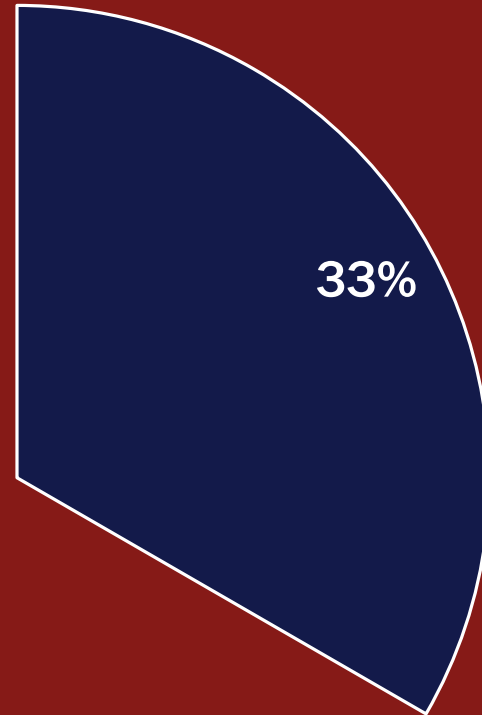




**Know the  
education  
level of  
your  
sample**

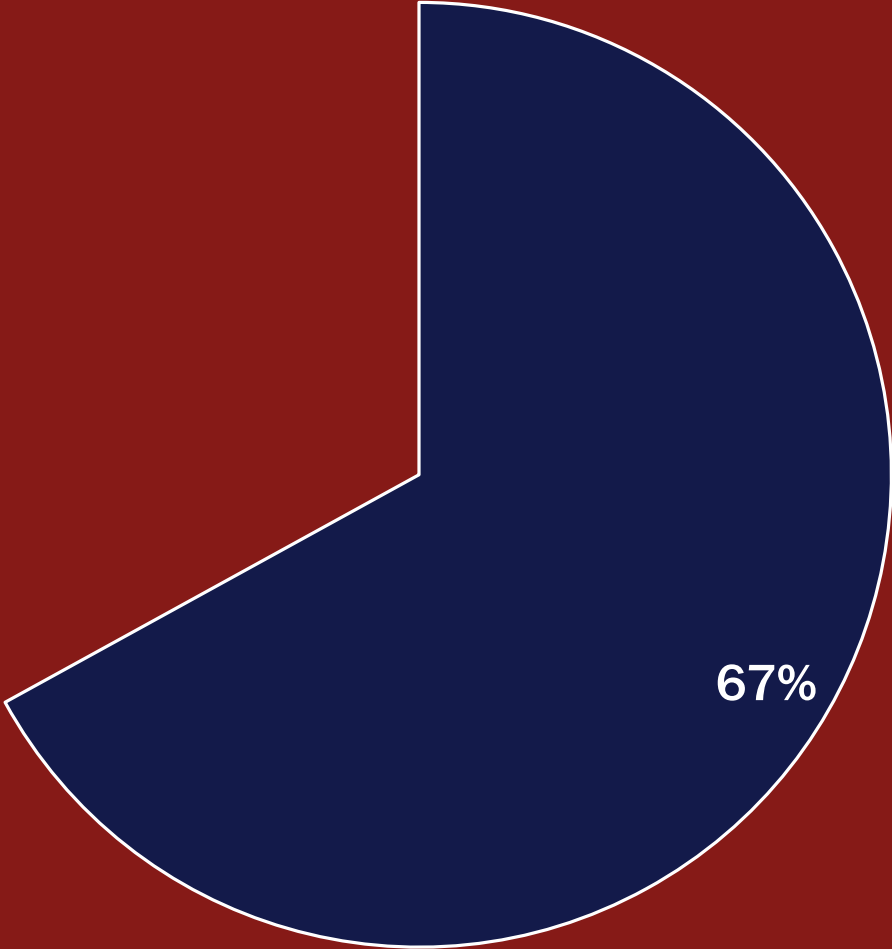
# Educational Achievement in Yemen

One-third of Yemenis are illiterate.



# Educational Achievement in Yemen

Two-thirds have received primary schooling or less.



Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following leaders, or do you not know much about them?

**Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following leaders, or do you not know much about them?**

- President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi
- Sanaa Mayor Abd al-Qadir Hilal
- Major General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar
- Huthi movement leader Abd al-Malik al-Huthi
- Former President Ali Abdullah Salih
- Businessman Hamid al-Ahmar
- Former Republican Guard Ahmad Ali Salih
- Defense Minister Mohammed Naser Ahmed

**Do you have a very favorable, somewhat favorable, somewhat unfavorable, or very unfavorable opinion of the following leaders, or do you not know much about them?**

- President Abd Rabuh Mansur Hadi 6% DK
- Sanaa Mayor Abd al-Qadir Hilal 59% DK
- Major General Ali Muhsin al-Ahmar 27% DK
- Huthi movement leader Abd al-Malik al-Huthi 18% DK
- Former President Ali Abdullah Salih 5% DK
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# Use pictures and nonverbal procedures



Please look at this list of candidates with their photos and party symbols. After I read out the list of 11 candidates for president, please tell me if the election were today, for whom would you vote?

د تاکنو خپلواک کمیسیون  
د ۱۳۹۳ کال د جمهوري رياست تاکنو  
د نوماندانو وروستني فهرست

کمیسیون مستقل انتخابات  
انتخابات ریاست جمهوری سال ۱۳۹۳  
فهرست نهایی کاندیدان

شماره کاندید	د نوماند نوم/اسم کاندید	اسم در ورقه رای دهی	تصویر	نشان انتخابی	نوع کاندیداتوری
1	داکتر عبدالله عبدالله	داکتر عبدالله عبدالله			اتحاد ملی افغانستان
2	محمد داوود سلطان زوی	محمد داوود سلطان زوی			خپلواک/مستقل
3	عبدالرحیم وردک	عبدالرحیم وردک			خپلواک/مستقل
4	عبدالغفور کرزی	عبدالغفور کرزی			خپلواک/مستقل
5	محمد اشرف غني احمدزی	محمد اشرف غني احمدزی			خپلواک/مستقل
6	محمد تاجر نجیب	محمد تاجر نجیب			خپلواک/مستقل

شماره کاندید	د نوماند نوم/اسم کاندید	اسم در ورقه رای دهی	تصویر	نشان انتخابی	نوع کاندیداتوری
7	زلمی رسول	زلمی رسول			خپلواک/مستقل
8	انجنیر قطب الدین هلال	انجنیر قطب الدین هلال			خپلواک/مستقل
9	محمد شفيق گل آغا شیرزی	محمد شفيق گل آغا شیرزی			خپلواک/مستقل
10	پروفیسور عبدالرب الرسول سیاف	پروفیسور عبدالرب الرسول سیاف			خپلواک/مستقل
11	هدایت امین ارسل	هدایت امین ارسل			خپلواک/مستقل



**Write knowledge question with  
research question in mind.**

# Purpose of Knowledge Question

Q-5. On what date will the 2014 elections be held? (OPEN-ENDED)

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Q-5. On what date will the 2014 elections be held? (OPEN-ENDED)

1. On April 5
2. Other date (within one month of April 5th, between March and April)
3. Other date (any other date outside of March and April)
4. Don't know exact date

---

98. Refused (vol.)

99. Don't Know (vol.)

# Behavior Questions



# Behavior Questions

**Intent:** to accurately record past, present or future behaviors

- Need to be carefully written to encourage truthful responses and avoid unintended distortions



Understand  
the  
behavioral  
norms in  
the country  
where  
you're  
working





Q15. In a typical week, please tell me if you engage in each of the following activities AT LEAST 2 DAYS WEEK for at least 10 minutes each day?

- a. Exercise or play sports
- b. Walk or ride a bicycle
- c. Do strenuous household chores like cleaning or gardening



# Recall

- **Time Elapsed:** memory diminishes over time
- **Saliency:** easier to remember details of salient events

# Timeframe and Salience

Negative Interplay

# Timeframe and Salience

## Negative Interplay

**Long time elapse, low salience:**

How much did you, yourself spend in total on potato chips in January 2011?

# Timeframe and Salience

## Negative Interplay

**Long time elapse, low salience:**

How much did you, yourself spend in total on potato chips in January 2011?

**Short time elapse, high salience:**

Did you, yourself get married last week?



# Timeframe and Salience

## Positive Interplay



# Timeframe and Salience

## Positive Interplay

Long time elapse, high salience:

Where were you when the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001 happened?





# Timeframe and Salience

## Positive Interplay

Long time elapse, high salience:

Where were you when the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington DC on September 11, 2001 happened?

Short time elapse, low salience:

How much money, if any, did you spend at restaurants yesterday?



**Be aware of how different perceptions of time will impact your survey questions**

# What Year is it in Afghanistan?

2015: Gregorian calendar

1393: Persian calendar

1436: Islamic calendar

5

6

2

13

9

20

6

27



# Telescoping



# Landmark Events

# Landmark Events

Q57. Were you personally or someone in your household injured prior to 2001?

1. Yes
2. No

Q58. Were you personally or someone in your household injured after 2001?

1. Yes
2. No

# Aided Recall

Aided recall provides the respondent with memory cues or external sources of information to reduce recall errors.

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Aided recall provides the respondent with memory cues or external sources of information to reduce recall errors.

- Use when concerned with under-reporting, not over-reporting.



# Aided Recall: External Data

## Available Records

- Tax survey
- Education survey

## Diaries

- Media survey
- Health survey

Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May

Still in same position, and see  
43 retreats the trenches again this  
afternoon. Big shells burst very  
close in early morning. Obtain  
medical supplies. Easy afternoon.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup>

Still shelling. One man killed  
by a stray bullet, and one wounded.  
Germans bombard ships & one  
shot into, but no damage done.

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup>

Reinforce 11<sup>th</sup> Batt at 8-3  
on extreme right. Lost one man  
in night, shot through side.  
Mail received here. I receive  
3 letters. Things very quiet on  
general front. Artillery made



Q53. On average, how long does it take for one round trip to obtain water from this source?

*This includes travel time to the source, wait time at the source, and return time. For bottled water, this refers to the amount of time it takes to travel to the shop, buy the water, and return.*



# Sensitive Questions



# Sensitive Questions

Any survey question dealing with a sensitive or potentially threatening topic, where special measures should be taken to increase respondent ease and encourage truthful responses.



**'Sensitive'  
subjects  
will differ  
from  
culture to  
culture.**



## ‘Sensitive’ Questions: Haiti

Q12. Have you ever given birth to a boy or girl who was born alive but later died?

PROBE: Any baby who cried or showed signs of life but did not survive?

# Factors that Impact Sensitivity

- Legal restrictions on free speech
- Religious or ethnic taboos
- Different concepts of public and private information

**Understand the  
true ramifications  
of asking a  
sensitive question.**





# Sensitive Questions: Iraq

Q6. Who provides security in your neighborhood? (Open-ended with pre-codes, DO NOT READ LIST)

**IMPORTANT:** If respondent says “The Islamic State of Iraq and Al-Sham, ISIS, Islamic State and Da’esh” Skip to Demographics and END interview

# The Casual Approach

Q-36. Thinking about voting, if you happen to know, can you tell me the location where people living in this voting precinct will go to cast their ballot on election day, or is this something you don't know?

1. Yes, knows the location
2. No, does not know location



# The Everybody Approach

Q6. As you know, many people in this area grow poppy along with other crops like wheat. Do you yourself happen to grow poppy?

1. Yes, grow poppy.
2. No, do not grow poppy.



# The Some/Other Approach

Q40. Some people think that sending girls to school is doing what the Qur'an and Hadith teach. Other people think that sending girls to school goes against the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith. Which is closer to your view?

1. Sending girls to school is doing what the Quran and Hadith teach
2. Sending girls to formal school goes against the teachings of the Qur'an and Hadith.



# Social Desirability Bias

# Tips: Socially Undesirable Questions

Deliberately load the question:

- “Everybody does it...”
- Assume the behavior, ask about frequency

Ask “have you ever” before asking “do you currently”

# Tips: Socially Desirable Questions

- Use the casual approach “Do you happen to...”
- Ask “do you currently” rather than “do you usually”

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- Ask “do you currently” rather than “do you usually”

**In all cases... avoid reliability checks within the same questionnaire!**

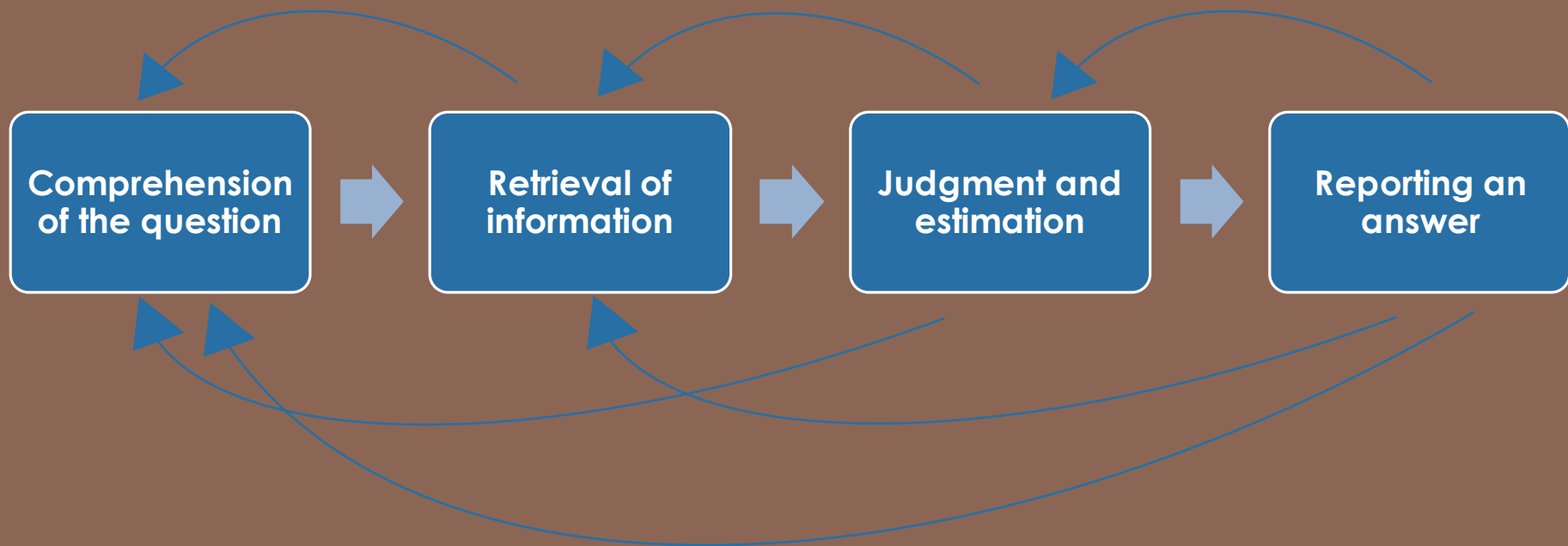


Tourangeau's

# **COGNITIVE PROCESS**

Tourangeau's

# COGNITIVE PROCESS



# HOW MANY KITKAT BARS

have you eaten in the past 30 days?



Four horizontal bars with blue arrowheads on the left side, intended for writing the number of KitKat bars eaten.

# HOW MANY KITKAT BARS

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Comprehension

- What type of candy is being asked about?
- What is the time frame?
- Does one package equal 1 bar or 4 bars?

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Retrieval

- Do I regularly eat Kit Kat bars?
- Has there recently been a holiday or party where I ate a lot of candy?

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## Retrieval

- Do I regularly eat Kit Kat bars?
- Has there recently been a holiday or party where I ate a lot of candy?

## Judgment

- If I usually eat 5 Kit Kat bars a week, I've probably eaten about 20 in the past 30 days.

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## Judgment

- If I usually eat 5 Kit Kat bars a week, I've probably eaten about 20 in the past 30 days.

## Reporting

- Does the question provide response options?
- Do I want to admit that I ate 20 Kit Kat bars in the past 30 days?

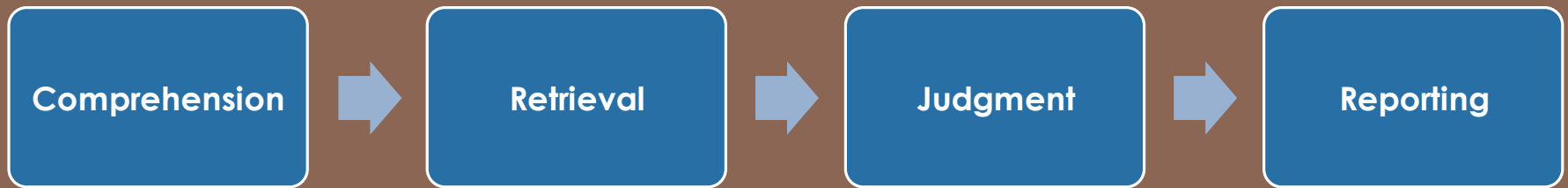
# **Overall, do you think globalization**

is a good thing, bad thing or neither good nor bad for Kenya?



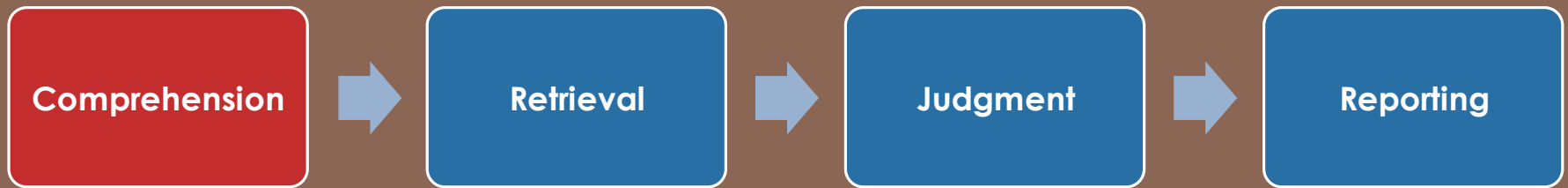
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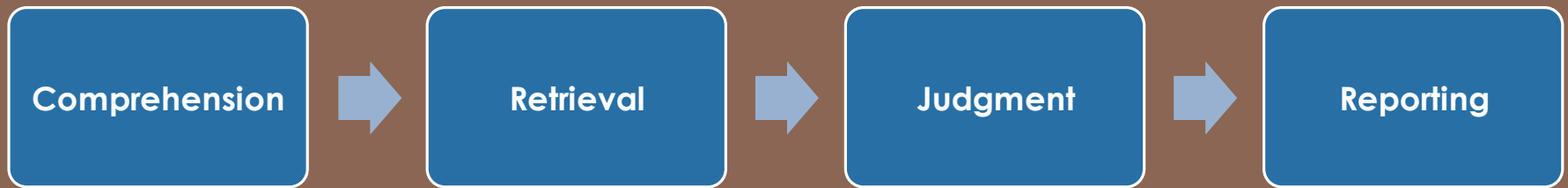
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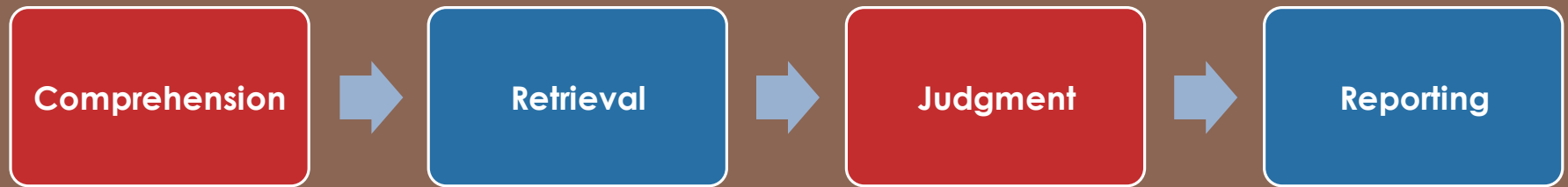


**Does the ministry currently have  
an internal strategic communication plan?**

# Does the ministry currently have an internal strategic communication plan?

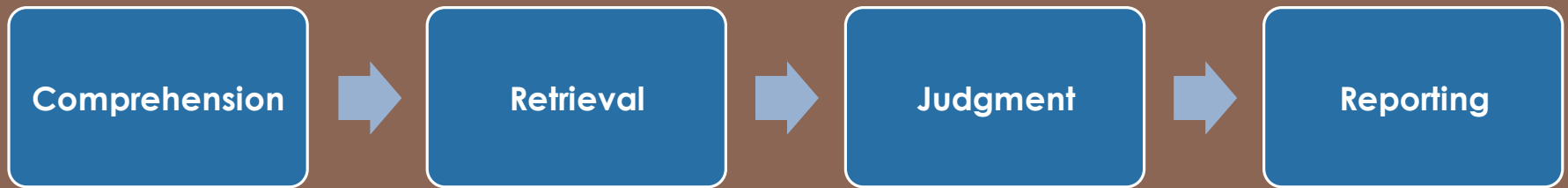


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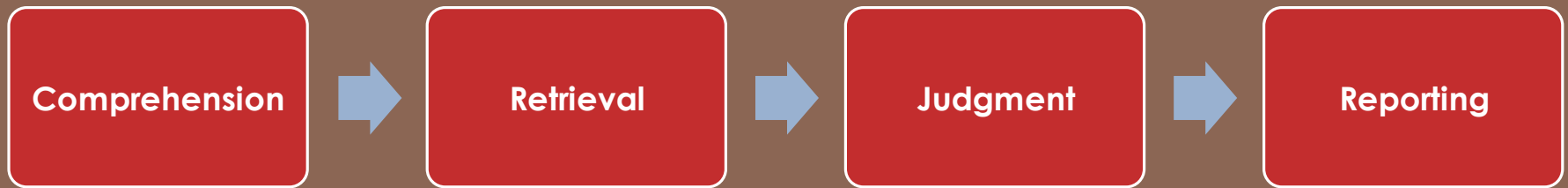


**How many cigarettes have you  
smoked in the past year?**

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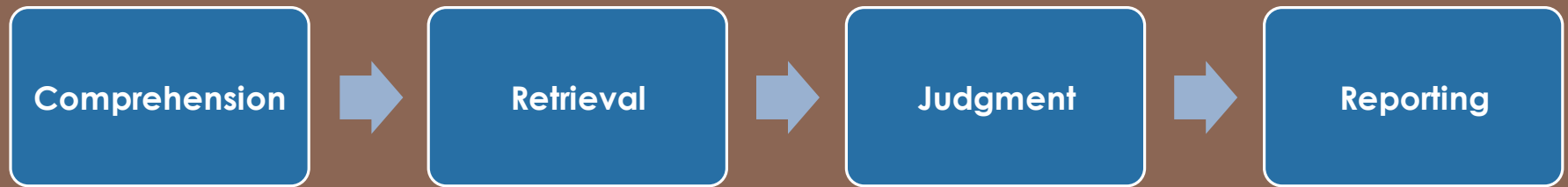
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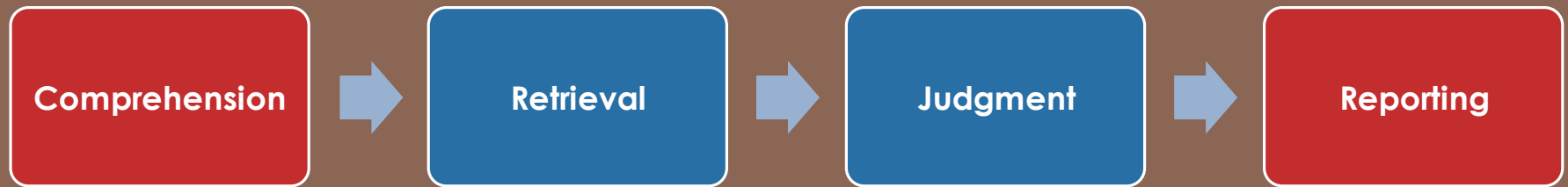


**Do you identify first as a citizen  
of Tanzania, or first as a Muslim?**

# Do you identify first as a citizen of Tanzania, or first as a Muslim?



# Do you identify first as a citizen of Tanzania, or first as a Muslim?



# Conclusions

- Check your assumptions
- Know the characteristics of your respondent population
- Know the strengths and weaknesses of the different question types
- Test your questions!

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